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ADVENTURES IN CIVICS

The following three experiments in teaching problems of citizenship are surely similar to those conducted in schools all over the country. They are recorded here simply in order to show the opportunities which an adaptable curriculum and schedule provide for the intensive study of certain subjects,—subjects which are of timely interest but which are charged also with a permanent significance and which possess educational value. The study of such problems may lead to an understanding of community life and government which is as unified and inclusive as that developed through the average consecutive course in civics. It may, moreover, through its very concreteness, leave the pupil with a more real sense of community experience than that which the other type of course would give.

Certain catastrophes and certain successes in our experiences, however, suggest a few warnings about this type of study. Problems must be chosen very carefully. The teacher must make sure that the problem is tangible; that it is not too complex, or, if it is inevitably complex, that only a phase of it be selected for study. It should not be complete in itself, a carefully weighed, counted and crated assortment of facts. It must lead out from itself in many directions which might appeal to different types of mind and open up new avenues of exploration. In developing the study the teacher who keeps sensitive to group and personal interests within the class will gather new hints from the discussion, develop them into possible fields to explore, change her plans as interests change, at the same time keeping a strong continuity of attention upon main issues. As she studies the material she will find ways to train the pupils in different mental processes. The definite teaching of such thought processes, sometimes assigned arbitrarily to the labelled compartments of science, history, mathematics, literature, or composition, may be welded into the experience of work on one problem. The natural result is that the child's thinking becomes more resourceful, more unified, more controlled and intelligent.

The whole educational value of the subject is often not discovered until the experiment is well under way. In the last of the instances here described this was particularly true. The subject

expanded amazingly with the actual work. It was undertaken with the hope that six weeks of work upon it would be worth while. The initial problem alone consumed six weeks and made the focus for the work of the entire remainder of the year.

NOTE.—As the Morning Exercises are frequently referred to in this article, the following explanatory paragraph from *Studies in Education*, Volume II, *The Morning Exercise as a Socializing Influence*, is reprinted here.

"The Morning Exercise of the Francis W. Parker School is the daily assembly of the whole school. It differs from the usual chapel exercise in that it is fundamentally social in purpose. The exercises grow out of the daily work of the school, or out of the interest of the children in some large, absorbing, outside question. They are usually the culmination of some line of study. The subject is sometimes science, the telling or illustrating of nature observations; the story of some visit to the farm, the art gallery or workshop; history, current events; the massing of the literature and music of some special subject or special day; the telling of stories that delight the children's hearts; or the discussion of some problem of vital significance in the community life of this school."

I. ON BECOMING A CITIZEN—SEVENTH GRADE

The seventh grade was studying the idea of a world state. In the discussion of the Roman Empire the problems of citizenship—the requirements, duties and privileges which it entailed—led the interest of the children one day to the more immediate problem of citizenship in the United States. They decided to find out all they could at home that evening about how one becomes a citizen in this country. The next day this fragmentary information was brought before the group, and after they had taken stock of it together, new plans were made for getting fuller information.

A group of the children who were particularly interested in the question visited the Naturalization Court in the Federal Building. They organized and presented to the class a report in the form of a scene in the court, which so interested the class that they decided to form their own naturalization court. The whole subject was taken up from the point of view of the real problems of different kinds of people, not from the more allegorical point of view which starts with the abstract idea and clothes it in a garment of concrete illustration. Each child chose to impersonate some fictitious person wishing to become an American citizen. Copies of the government blanks for the first and second papers were secured, and each one filled in the information demanded in the application for citizenship,

consulting the necessary references to make his statements accurate. The special cases demanded knowledge of a variety of laws. For instance, the problem of the Chinaman demanded consideration differing widely from that of the Italian. The illiterate, the dependent, the man who had let the time limit of his first papers expire, and a number of other cases were represented.

The court sat when and where it could. The officials were changed often so that many members of the class might have the opportunity to hear and judge cases. From time to time three or four children simply left their other work (for the practicability of this plan see the article on the *Project Method*, in this volume), arranged the court, and heard the cases of the day, until every candidate had been admitted to or excluded from citizenship, according to the law.

The class wanted to give the experience to the school in a vivid way, so they decided to give a morning exercise in the form of a play. Together they worked out a rough plan. Choosing the scenes they cared to work on, they formed four groups to write the four-scene play on the basis of the general plan all had accepted. Two of these groups met with teachers; the other two did their work alone. When it was done, the class met, read the whole play, and made the needed revisions; parts were then assigned. There were only two rehearsals before the class gave the play for the school. The speeches were not actually memorized, because by this time the children were so familiar with their material that, with the plan in mind, they could go ahead with a more spontaneous presentation. The only part in the play in which the actors were dependent upon memorized speeches was the part in which a would-be citizen, ignorant of the English language, explained her situation in her "native" French tongue.

The four scenes of the play were: a discussion in the street between a newly made citizen and an alien on the values of United States citizenship; the issuing of first papers in the Federal Building; the filing of the second paper in the naturalization office; and the Naturalization Court, in which a number of persons took the oath and received their certificates of citizenship. In this last scene the United States flag hanging over the judge's desk, the use of the official school seal in stamping the documents, the dignified observance of court ceremonial, the earnestness of the people on the stage, and their freedom in the use of fact, made the audience feel the

dignity and the reality of the occasion.

Since there was no rigid time-limiting schedule in the seventh grade to hamper the freedom of the work, it is difficult to estimate the exact time spent on the naturalization subject. It ran along intermittently for perhaps two months. During most of that time there was only an occasional half-hour session of the court for examination and issuing of certificates. Now and then, when need arose, the class spent a longer time writing the judge's speech, hearing new facts gathered by somebody, writing the scenes of the play and rehearsing.

II. THE GOVERNMENT OF GERMANY—EIGHTH GRADE

When a morning exercise elicits questions from everywhere in the assembly, as this one on Germany's government did, and when the questions are answered by the class giving the exercise as well as from everywhere in the assembly, and when additional information is volunteered by teachers or older pupils, we are disposed to think that the exercise has been satisfactory from the point of view of social service. The stenographic report which follows, of the eighth grade morning exercise on the imperial government of Germany (given in 1917, long before the collapse of this government) shows the brisk exchange of question and answer at the close, an indication that the school valued the information which the class was trying to give.

Work on this subject was undertaken with the idea of substituting patriotism for jingoism, by giving American boys and girls certain facts from which they themselves could make deductions. Of the importance of understanding the German government, as far as one can understand a government not his own, I need say nothing. But to indicate the children's appreciation of this importance, I think the following fact is not irrelevant. Just as we had finished the study, we were opportunely asked to present our information in a morning exercise. The class divided the subject into nine parts, and arranged themselves in groups of two or three. The general form of statement, "If in America" such and such a thing were true, "that would not be democratic," was of course agreed upon before the groups went to work separately. They worked in these groups for one forty-minute period in the endeavor to make their points clear, and—this is the part I thought illuminating—in every case but one the statement submitted by the group was used

in the morning exercise, with only very minor changes.

This comparative accuracy of information, after a very limited amount of study in which no papers had been written and no text used, is due certainly to the eagerness of the class to know about German government. Earlier in the year they had read and studied Mr. Wilson's reply to the Pope's peace note. They had selected, as the pivotal idea in this paper, the statement that we cannot take the word of the "present German government" because it is not a democratic government. In order to discover what Mr. Wilson meant by a democratic government, they had made a careful study of our constitution, its history as well as its content. Then they were eager to study the German government and find out what an autocracy was. The teacher knew of no available text. (She would now have used the pamphlet on the subject issued by the War Information Bureau: *The Government of Germany*, by Hazen.) The study had to be done, therefore, almost entirely from the children's questions. The class used its previous knowledge of the American constitution as a basis for comparison. The whole matter of preparation for this exercise occupied not more than three periods, an indication that the interest was keen and the intelligence active, and that the children's information, though gained in a very short time, was accurate and usable.

AUTOCRACY AND DEMOCRACY—A MORNING EXERCISE

John. Americans believe in democracy. Ours is a government of the people, by the people, for the people. The Declaration of Independence says, "All men are created equal." For this principle our young men are giving their lives. America does not like war. President Wilson said: "It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the thing that we have always carried nearest to our hearts, for democracy."

As everybody knows, in August the President wrote a reply to the Pope's peace note. In this famous reply he said that we cannot fight this war again; that the *status quo ante bellum*, which the Pope proposes to return to, is not a basis for lasting peace; that it would merely give Germany time to recuperate; that the test of every plan for peace is: is it based upon the faith of all the people involved?—and finally, that we cannot take the word of the present German government. This was the President's famous answer to the Pope's peace note. We cannot take the word of Germany because it is not the word of the German people. This morning we are endeavoring to tell what we mean when we say that the word of the German government is not the word of the German people. In other words, we are

endeavoring to tell what autocracy is. It was because we wished to know what autocracy meant, that we studied the German government, and we thought that you, who are all loyal Americans, would like to understand it, too.

Alexis. If in America the governors of the state were governors by divine right, this would be as it is in Germany, and would not be democratic. If these governors, who were chosen by God, made a constitution without referring it to the people, this would not be democratic. In America, however, this was not the case. The framers of the constitution were elected by the people, and after the constitution was drafted, it was put before the people to vote on. This was democratic. In Germany the people who made the constitution were not elected or appointed by the people, but were chosen by divine right, and after they had made the constitution the people were made to abide by it without any voice in the matter whatsoever.

Juniata. If, according to this constitution, the governor of New York would always be the President of the country, that would not be democratic. However, this is the case in Germany, for according to the constitution the King of Prussia is always the Emperor of Germany. Prussia has, to be sure, three-fifths of the population of Germany, the greatest part of the wealth, and all the large cities.

Marion. The governor and legislature of New York are elected by direct, popular, secret ballot. This is, of course, very democratic. This, however, is not the case in Prussia. If, in the state of New York, four percent of the population, only the very wealthy people, had one-third of the votes, while eighty-five percent, the poor people, had only one-third of the votes, that would be very undemocratic. That is how it has been in Prussia. The rich man's vote counted twenty times as much as the poor man's. The German Junkers are few but very rich, and their votes count as much as all the common people's votes.

Charles. If in America only the millionaires of New York City were appointed to represent the New York people in the Senate, this would be very undemocratic. In Germany the King of Prussia, namely the Kaiser, appoints only Prussian Junkers to represent Prussia in the Bundesrat. If in America only the millionaires of New York State were appointed by the President to his cabinet, it would be very undemocratic. In Germany the Kaiser appoints only Prussian Junkers to his cabinet; also, the highest officers of the army and navy are Junkers.

If in New York State only a few men owned almost all the land and controlled almost all the votes, it would be very undemocratic. In Prussia the Junkers own most of the land and control almost all of the votes. They are responsible for the militarism and jingoism of Germany, and they are the ones that have stood for a powerful army and navy.

Catherine. If in America the House of Representatives were the only house elected by the people, that would not be democratic. In Germany the Reichstag is the only house elected by direct popular vote, by secret ballot. It has great influence but no real power. If in America the House of Representatives were not paid, that would not be democratic. In Germany the

Reichstag has voted over and over again that its members be paid, but this bill has always been defeated by the Bundesrat, which is dominated by Prussian Junkers. If in America the State of New York had more than half the members of the House of Representatives, that would not be fair to the rest of the country. In Germany, Prussia has 238 of the 397 members of the Reichstag.

Lisette. It is necessary for me to compare England and Germany instead of the United States and Germany. If in England the Prime Minister were chosen by the king instead of by the people, this would not be democratic. In Germany the Chancellor is chosen by the Kaiser. Up to the present time the Chancellors of Germany have always been Junkers, but at present von Hertling of Bavaria is the Chancellor.

Carter. If in England the Prime Minister repeatedly brought a bill before the House of Commons, and they repeatedly refused to pass this bill, and the Prime Minister yet retained his position, this would not be democratic. This is the case in Germany. In England if the Prime Minister presents a bill to the House of Commons, and they refuse to pass the bill, Parliament is dissolved and a new election takes place. This is called parliamentary responsibility. Some people think England is more democratic than America because of its parliamentary responsibility.

Maxine. If we had class distinctions, such as there are in Germany, between the Junkers, middle class, and peasants, it would be very undemocratic. The Junkers are wealthy land owners who hire the peasants to work for them, and they pay these peasants very poor wages. If a person is born a peasant he cannot become a member of a higher class. Caste is everywhere. It rules in education, and especially in politics. Official rank has an authority in Germany not to be found in any other country.

Carl. If in America the President were the autocratic ruler of three-fifths of the United States, it would not be democratic. In Germany the Kaiser has almost complete autocratic rule over Prussia, which is three-fifths of Germany. The Kaiser has his office by divine right. In America the President has command of the army and navy during his four-year term. In Germany, however, the Kaiser has command of the army and navy for life.

Edward. We have tried to point out to you some of the features of autocracy. We have left out some matters such as the unfair electoral vote, which we do not know much about. We have tried to show you, also, how the Reichstag has really no power, and that the Bundesrat, which is not elected by the people, really controls legislation. We have shown that Prussia controls Germany, and that the Kaiser and the Junker class control Prussia. It is certainly not very democratic to have a Kaiser who rules by divine right, or is chosen by God. If there are any questions, we will try to answer them.

Question. What is the secret ballot?

Eighth Grader. The man in casting his vote does not give it to anybody openly, but slips it into a box without anyone else having seen it. We have the secret ballot in all our elections.

Question. What is the difference between Germany and Prussia?

Eighth Grader. Prussia is one of the states of Germany.

Question. What is a Junker?

High School Boy. A Junker is a nobleman. They are all called Junkers if they are worth a certain sum of money and own a large area of land. It is a hereditary position. A man cannot be a peasant and rise to be a Junker. Junker means "young nobleman."

Eighth Grader. I forgot to say that although we call Germany autocratic, in some ways it is like a democracy. The government takes care of the poorer classes a great deal better than we do.

Question. You say the Kaiser rules over three-fifths of Germany. Who controls the other two-fifths?

Eighth Grader. The other two-fifths comprise over twenty-four states. The largest of these is Bavaria, and then comes Saxony, and then a number of smaller ones.

Question. Doesn't the Kaiser rule all these states?

Eighth Grader. The Kaiser rules all Germany. But each state has a king or duke or grand duke, so the Kaiser does not have autocratic rule in any state but Prussia.

Question. Are there other rulers that rule by divine right, as in Germany?

Eighth Grader. Japan.

Question. Is the Reichstag in Germany the same as our Congress in Washington?

Eighth Grader. The Reichstag is more like our House of Representatives, because it represents the people—or at least it is supposed to—but its power is very weak. They have no parliamentary responsibility. The Bundesrat is more like our Senate: that is, its members come from the different states. But our Senate is elected by the people, while the members of the Bundesrat are appointed by the rulers of their respective countries. Twenty members come from Prussia and are appointed by the Kaiser. It takes only fourteen votes to defeat any change in the constitution, so the Kaiser can prevent the Reichstag from making Germany more democratic.

III. A WAR POEM

The same class agreed to try to write a poem which should express what Americans were thinking about the war. Their product follows:

The gauntlet of battle is flung at our feet;
 We march with high purpose the challenge to meet.
 We shame not our fathers of yore.
 More precious than peace are Justice and Right.
 Let our country help win them by blood and by might,
 For this is a war to end war.

The people are shouting all over the world,
Let tyranny down from its dark throne be hurled,
For Liberty's sake evermore."
Our banners are flung full to the wind—
And well may they tremble, those who have sinned—
For this is a war to end war.

Nor treasure nor land for ourselves shall we take;
We fight as one champion for all mankind's sake,
That Justice may rule evermore.
No longer can patience the trial endure;
We fight Freedom's battle to make peace secure—
For this is a war to end war.

Obviously, it is not because of the high quality of the verse that I consider this piece of composition worthy of record and comment. Some of the children were very proud of it. "I thought it would be sung all over the world," one of them said, and many of the children frankly avowed that it was the "best war poem they had read." But there were of course other children of fine natural taste, careful home and school training in appreciation, and dawning power of expression, who knew that there were poems more beautiful than theirs. From the teacher's point of view, the work had value quite aside from the quality of the final product. In the first place, the eagerness and earnestness with which the children undertook so novel a task was gratifying. Their spirit was one of pride in their Americanism, fairly free from jingoism.

It was interesting to see the use they made of work in other subjects. They had studied President Wilson's reply to the Pope's peace plea. The issue, democracy against autocracy, was getting its somewhat shadowy outline defined in their minds by the careful comparison they were making of the American with the German constitution, and they studied eagerly, for help in ideas and expression, all quotations that were given them from President Wilson's addresses.

As all teachers know, there is a limit to the time which can profitably be spent upon such a piece of work; still we did give several lessons to it. We first agreed upon a first line and a rhyme scheme. The interest of the children was evinced by the fact that they kept the task in mind after this initial step, and brought in new

lines as they worked them out. The lines we rejected—much more numerous, of course, than those we kept—were rejected generally because the idea had been better expressed by some one else. When we had finished the verses, a small volunteer group, working with the music teacher, made a melody for them.

IV. A COURSE IN CIVICS AND ENGLISH—NINTH GRADE

When school opened in September, 1917, the subject of the war and our country's share in it appeared perpetually in the conversation of the ninth grade. Summer experiences were exchanged—watching troop trains pass daily, visiting one of the big camps, talking with a draft board official, seeing a brother off to France. A day or two of general discussion resulted in a long list of questions about our part in the war. Partly because most of the children's interest and their fragmentary glimpses of army organization, and partly because, having worked in a draft board office during the summer, I was convinced that there was much in the subject to interest high school people, we undertook as our first problem the Selective Service Act and its operation. The English and civics courses were combined, making a total of seven periods a week, and the two teachers planned the course together. In mingling the two subjects one had to watch carefully lest the interest of the one subject crowd out the qualities which are essential to work in the other. One had to make certain that there should be good reading and definite training in the elements of composition.

We started out with a brief analysis of the main features of the law itself. Two groups reported on the compulsory military service schemes of France and Germany. Then we decided to have our own draft board. Securing sample blanks from a local board, we named a registration hour, and each child chose to represent some one within the registration requirements. We chose our local board on a rotating scheme, so that most of the class members served at one time or another.

When the registration was complete, the local board shuffled the blanks and gave them their "red ink" or serial numbers. A group undertook the drawing of the "call" numbers in Washington, and the cards were renumbered in "call" order by the local board. The board was then ready for the filing of exemption claims, and the registrants were summoned. Each registrant was expected to study his own situation thoroughly, in the light of the regulations,

and to fill out his own papers, with the privilege of consulting the local board or the teacher. We found that our group included, besides those who made no claim for exemption, the allied alien, the neutral alien, the enemy alien, the declarant, a variety of dependency cases, and several who, because they were involved in government service or necessary industries, were exempt from military service. A few of the children visited local boards in their neighborhoods, and others sought advice about their cases from officials with whom they were acquainted. After the exemption affidavits had been filed, the board met and discussed the cases, calling in all the doubtful ones for conference before a decision was made. The most difficult cases to decide were the dependency ones, and a rather sketchy attempt was made to work out a minimum budget for individuals and for families, as an aid in fair decision. The result, compounded from questioning a few families living under different economic conditions, and from finding out prices of essential commodities, was more suggestive than it was accurate.

The report of the board to the class suggested a morning exercise, which was later given: a careful explanation to the school of the workings of the draft, followed by the presentation of a scene in a local board office when registrants were summoned to present or waive their exemption claims. Discussion in the class carried us over to a brief study of the conditions which were met by the local board with which I had been working. This immigrant district, with twelve thousand registrants crowded into approximately one square mile, including a large percentage of aliens of many nationalities, with an imperative dependency claim attached to almost every case, challenged the class to serious thinking. Here are a few of the questions they formulated: Why are certain sections of the city desperately overcrowded, and what is the effect of this crowding upon the families living there? Why is it that immigrants are usually living in these districts? Do the immigrant American soldiers know what they are fighting for? Is a person really American when he has been sworn in as a citizen? How can we make America's ideals clear to immigrants? What has America to offer them? What are America's ideals, anyway? How did these ideals come to be formulated? What has made people in Europe, ever since 1492, want to leave their homes and come to America? Does the word "American" mean the type of the early colonist or that of the more recent immigrant? What are the privileges and the

obligations of citizenship in the country?

Gradually the course centered about two big subjects: migrations to America, and the development of democracy in America. We started with a very brief review of the voyages of discovery and exploration—a subject which had been studied in earlier grades. Then for almost three months we studied certain colonial groups: the Pilgrims, the Puritans, the Cavaliers, and the Dutch. Why did these people come to America? How did they have to alter their mode of living in America? What did America give to them? What did they give to America? This demanded a good deal of delving into history, for it was our aim to base the discussion, not upon guesswork but upon definite information, and to emphasize the need of accurate thought and statement. Perhaps it is too great a problem to set before people with so little historical background. The chief aim of this work, however, and of our later work, lay in the attempt to make it possible for the children to become aware of certain great truths, the special worth and contribution to our national life of people of different nationalities; the responsibility a democracy must assume in protecting and extending its liberty and justice; the struggle toward democracy here and in the European countries whence many of our citizens come; the loyalty of many of these new citizens to America as it is shown in their active, responsible citizenship; the responsibility of America now and in the future toward the growth of democracy in the world.

Out of the colonial study the problem of the negro and his relation to the national life emerged, and several weeks were spent in studying this and certain facts of the reconstruction period at the close of the Civil War. This work brought out the bad effects of extreme party feeling, the inability of a race to acquire an intelligent sense of responsibility over night, and the duty of the nation to educate such a group toward citizenship.

The last three months were spent on recent immigrations to America. After a brief study of the early nineteenth century movements of groups of Germans, British, and Scandinavians toward this country, the tremendous influx of foreigners after 1880 was taken up in greater detail: the proportions and distribution of the different nationalities; the reasons for their coming; the present immigration law and regulations; the organizations in Chicago which help to secure protection and employment; the types of work

usually done by immigrants.

This may sound like the outline of a college seminar course, and introducing it into the first year of high school may seem an utter absurdity. But the reader must of course realize that the whole thing was carried on in a manner much more child-like and fragmentary and concrete than these terms imply. Nevertheless, thorough work in the reading of difficult books was certainly done. Through this work, moreover, the use of reference books and of the library was learned. The necessity of taking notes in clear, reduced form, and of putting in order scraps of information from various sources, showed the value of the topical outline, the principles of which were learned and put into service at the beginning of the year. A number of stories were written about colonial life, and a Pilgrim play, portraying the life of a Pilgrim family in Holland and in Massachusetts, was written and presented. Stories, diaries, and descriptions were written about immigrants of today. A morning exercise on the draft—described earlier in this article—was given. A rough map showing the chief foreign districts of Chicago was made on the basis of our own wanderings about the city. Editorials were composed, urging increased or decreased restriction of immigration, demanding training in citizenship, or explaining American ideals to the newcomer. The subject was rich in suggestive material for varied forms of composition.

The reading was of three sorts: exposition, description, and folk literature. The first kind included such books as government reports and selected parts of *American History and Its Geographic Conditions* (Semple), and *Our Slavic Fellow-Citizens* (Balch). The second kind included certain magazine articles and vivid, true, descriptive books (by Riis, Steiner, Antin, and others). The third type of reading, which I suppose would qualify more surely as "literature," started out with folk poems and stories of the nations some of whose people are rapidly becoming Americans: Irish fairy tales, Russian and Norse legends, *The Bard of the Dimbovitza* (Roumanian) and a few others; this was followed by reading decided upon entirely by the teachers, with only the mild approval of the pupils, who urged more "modern stuff." It consisted of a rather thorough study of English and Scotch ballads, and the reading by each child of one of the longer epics—the *Odyssey*, the *Iliad*, *Beowulf*, the *Song of Roland*, or Morris'

Sigurd the Volsung. Some of the written work was based on this reading. There was a good deal of discussion—initiated by the pupils, whose interest had somehow revived—about folk literature and its place in the life of a people.

We have found that the chief dangers of this type of course are that the children may become content with superficiality, may think they know what they do not know, may be unable to organize scattered units in their minds, or may in some other way struggle with the discouragement of tackling work far beyond their capacity. We tried to meet these dangers by selecting a few significant units from the mass of material, and by insisting upon thorough, accurate studying. Although the main course of action had to be determined from week to week by the teachers, we tried to keep it from becoming rigid or alien to the interests of the group, by following up the problems which arose in their minds as well as the ones that occurred to us as interesting.

I realize that it would be difficult to attempt a piece of work of this sort unless certain conditions favored freedom of experiment, but I believe that teachers everywhere should work toward obtaining conditions that make possible a certain amount of freedom and adaptation of their work to special needs. The only "outside" requirements which we had to meet were those for college entrance, which we covered in the course without too great a deviation from our special lines of interest. Our schedule was the usual unbending high school schedule, but occasional study periods were used for group work. There were two sections of the class, one numbering fifteen and the other twenty-two pupils. Each section was sometimes divided into groups of four or five members to do a special piece of work for the class. Sometimes these groups met with the teacher; sometimes they worked independently. At times the teacher met only with the chairman of the groups, giving them suggestions for directing the work of the groups. The groups met anywhere and everywhere: in vacant rooms, which could rarely be found; in the hall; or on the landing, when no other space was available. Sometimes a group was formed by the teacher on the basis of special needs, for extra training in outlining or organizing a report or reviewing a difficult subject. Frequent individual conferences helped to achieve good workmanship, to clear cloudy understanding, to start fresh interest. In fact, without the opportunity of doing a certain amount of work with individuals and small groups, it seems

to me difficult to maintain in any group of pupils a sturdy vitality and independence of thought and a sense of thoroughness and fineness of technique.

Always we tried to make it possible for the people in the class to see for themselves the life lived by human beings, rather than to memorize abstract conclusions. We tried to make it possible for them to realize some of the actual relations between actual human beings and their government, to gain a greater understanding of the many peoples who all together make up present-day America, to become aware of the legend and literature that have grown out of the life of nations in the making, to realize the necessity of a sound basis for judgment and of good workmanship in thinking, and to begin to form a point of view about community problems which will help them to become intelligent citizens.

Perhaps the most immediate reason for the existence of a course of this sort—and its inherent values are latent also in much of the unrealized material of history and daily experience and literature—is the arrangement of the average high school curriculum. At the age of fourteen, when ideals form and change rapidly, many school children—at least those who are working toward college—are spending the greater part of their time in studying subjects which offer “mental discipline,” the training of memory, abstract logic, and individual skill, rather than social understanding. Work in foreign languages seems to be at this stage largely a technical matter of grammar and vocabulary. This, with the required mathematics, consumes about two-thirds of the children’s study time. Until this condition be changed, is it not imperative that the remaining one-third shall be full of rich content which will expand the horizon of human experience and quicken the imagination?

